

mitigates the need for jobless benefits. There has not been job growth in our country. I would like to talk about a conversation I had with a constituent of mine. Let us call her Mrs. Crawford. Mrs. Crawford, single and 60 years old, was laid off quite some time ago. In January she joined the 80,000 Americans who lose their unemployment benefits each week. I asked Mrs. Crawford if the administration's economic policies have helped her, and she told me that not only did she not receive any tax cuts that were supposed to stimulate the economy, the so-called economic growth as a result of these tax cuts has not increased her job opportunities.

The administration will tell her that the economy is growing, and we do not need extension on jobless benefits, but they have conveniently left out the fact that the temporary extension was created to deal with the very economic conditions we face today. In fact, the program was created when unemployment stood at 5.7 percent and the country had lost 2 million jobs. Now, the unemployment rate is at 5.6 and the country has lost a net of 2.35 million jobs. And with 80,000 Americans losing their unemployment benefits each week with no jobs to go to, there is no doubt about the need for an extension.

The Senate voted last month, 58 to 39, to support an extension. Let us stop sending the American people these symbolic, yet mixed messages of support, and pass a clean bill extending unemployment benefits. If the majority of this Congress is not going to talk straight on the economy, the least they can do is provide Americans with temporary relief.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SUPPORTING BUSH ECONOMIC INITIATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of President Bush's economic initiatives. As a former small businessman, I have watched closely as the President's initiatives have improved the economy, even in the aftermath of September 11.

Mr. Speaker, we are getting a lot of backlash from folks who say the economy is not doing well. Well, they are wrong. These are just a few of the positive headlines that are coming out of my district: "West Texas Housing Moves Up At Record Levels." "State-wide Confidence Index Predicts Economy is on the Upswing." "Jobless Rate

the Lowest in Almost 4 Years." "The Economy is Doing Well."

When President Bush took office, the economy was headed into a recession. The stock market had just collapsed, the manufacturing industry was at an all-time low, and then the United States was hit with the events of 9-11, and then military campaigns on the war on terrorism. Now, durable goods shipments are up, factory orders are up, consumer spending is up. Today the housing ownership rate in America is the highest it has ever been in the history of this country. The President has shown, and I agree, when you put the money in the hands of the small business people in America, they will create jobs. Mr. Speaker, what the President knows and what I know is that the American people know how to spend their own money a lot better than the United States Congress does.

In an article dated just a week ago in Odessa, Texas, saw sales tax revenues rise for the 15th straight month, and the entire Permian Basin showed strong gains and signs of improving. In Odessa, more and more people are employed and they are spending their money, which is strengthening the local economies.

The Democrats are saying, we are not adding jobs to this economy. Well, the truth is, the economy has experienced 6 consecutive months of job growth and has added 364,000 jobs over the last 6 months. There are nearly 3 million more workers now than in early 2002. Basically, more Americans were working in January 2004 than at any other time in the history of this country.

Democrats would have the American people believe that more and more people are being laid off every day. Once again, they are wrong. The unemployment rate is down. Today's rate, in fact, is below the average for the entire decades of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. Even when the Democrats ended a temporary extended unemployment benefits program in the 1990s, today's unemployment rate is lower than it was at that time.

The manufacturing arena, which has struggled for 37 months of decline, is reporting expanded employment for the fourth consecutive month. So that when Democrats complain that the industry is hemorrhaging, that is simply not true. Like former President Reagan, I believe fervently that the government should cut taxes and regulations on small businesses, enabling them to do what they do best, and that is create jobs.

Those in the House who oppose these values believe that the Federal Government has an income problem. That is not true. The Federal Government has a spending problem.

When my sons came home from college and said, Dad, I am out of money, can I have some more, the answer was, no, you will have to tighten your budget and work with the money that your mother and I give you. What they

know, what I know, and what my colleagues know is the way we cure deficits is not with giving people more money; you encourage them to spend less money. And that is the way the Federal Government should act.

I believe in tax cuts as a solution rather than a contributor to the deficits. I credit President Bush's tax cuts, which were pushed through Congress for an additional 21,000 new jobs just last month.

I served for years in the land development industry, and I watched the market move up and down and back and forth, but more recently I have seen a huge surge in the housing market. More single family homes were purchased in 2003 than any other year in the history of this country, and the homeownership rate in America is at an all-time high. President Bush's initiatives to dismantle the barriers to homeownership include providing down payment assistance through the American Dream Down Payment Initiative, increasing the supply of affordable homes through the Single Family Affordable Housing Tax Credit, and increasing the support for the Self-Help Ownership and Opportunities Program, and increasing home-buying education and counseling.

In June 2002, President Bush issued the American Homeowners Challenge to the real estate and mortgage finance industries to encourage them to join the effort to close the gap that exists between minorities and nonminorities. The President also announced the goal of increasing the number of minority homeownership by at least 5.5 million families before the end of the decade.

Congress has a choice. It can continue to grow the economy and create jobs as the President's policies are doing, or it can raise taxes on American families, hurting the economic recovery and any future job creation.

I stand with small businessmen and women of America who say the President is absolutely right.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BLUMENAUER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)